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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2669

July 1, 1994

**IMPROVING FOOD SAFETY** -- A food safety project team has been formed by USDA to determine where pathogens harmful to humans are most likely to be introduced in the food animal production chain. The food safety team will develop intervention strategies. Initiatives will include coordinating preharvest food safety education, and working with industry groups on programs that reduce the risk of microorganism contamination during livestock production and marketing. **Contact: Margaret Webb (301) 436-6464.**

**IMPACT OF EXPORTS** -- USDA research shows that rural employment growth depends more strongly on U.S. exports than does the general employment sector. While growth of exports was weak last year, it is expected that the demands of developing nations for U.S. agricultural products will remain strong this year. Recovery of the European and Japanese economies will boost their demand for U.S. goods and is forecast to strengthen later this year, giving a prospect for growth in the rural economy. **Contact: D.A. Torgerson (202) 219-0782.**

**ECONOMIC GROWTH** -- Trade policy changes are redefining world markets and creating regional trade blocs that are shifting trade patterns. Mexico has implemented a program to decouple agricultural support by making government payments directly to farmers on a per-hectare basis. The system replaces a traditional price support mechanism based on high guaranteed prices and agreed minimum prices. The new system in Mexico matches the goals of support measures that have no trade-distorting effects, as called for in the North American Free Trade Agreement and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Further trade liberalization under NAFTA will promote more rapid economic growth that is expected to increase demand for food and agricultural products trade among the nations of the Western Hemisphere. **Contact: Robert Reinsel (202) 219-0689.**

**FORESTS AND GRASSLANDS PAYBACK** -- USDA will distribute to 43 states and Puerto Rico an estimated \$299 million in 1994 receipts from national forests and grasslands. The receipts are collected from land-use fees and sale of resources on 191 million acres of national forests and grasslands. Federal law requires states to use their share for public schools and roads. Interim payments totaling 75 percent of the estimated receipts will be made in October, and the balance in December. **Contact: Linda Feldman (202) 205-1668.**

**FEE BOOST** -- Certification costs and fees for grading fresh fruit and vegetables are being increased by USDA. Fee increases range from \$3 to \$6, and a new fee of \$37 is charged for inspection of quality and condition that replaces a higher half carlot fee. The increases went into effect June 27. USDA is required to establish the user fee program to recover the cost of developing and maintaining U.S. grade standards for agricultural commodities. The service is provided at terminal markets for fruits, vegetables and horticultural products. **Contact: Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998.**

**INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT** -- Over half the nation's fruit, vegetable and major field crop producers are now using integrated pest management (IPM) to control pest levels in their crops. The IPM system uses a number of biological and other nonchemical pest control strategies as well as more efficient use of pesticides through monitoring pest levels. In response to public interest in a clean environment and reduced use of chemicals, biological methods are increasingly being reviewed for use in IPM programs. A USDA study shows that pest monitoring and biological strategies that disrupt pest breeding have been widely adopted by producers. Implementation of IPM programs for crops with high health or environmental risks will yield the greatest benefits in risk reduction. **Contact: Ann Vandeman (202) 219-0434.**

**BIOTECHNOLOGY** -- The development of biotechnology may be the beginning of a new agricultural revolution. Biotechnology is defined as the use of living organisms to solve problems or make useful products, which includes traditional plant and animal breeding methods. In 1990 the first genetically engineered food product entered the market, an item used in the production of cheese and other processed dairy products. Worldwide, biotechnology companies have raised \$20 billion on the public market from 1980 to 1993 for research. In the United States, USDA is among the leading Federal departments promoting technology transfer between government scientists and private companies to develop and commercialize discoveries. A USDA study shows that a significant amount of the economic benefits of biotechnology will be distributed to consumers in the form of increased supplies, lower prices, and higher valued products. **Contact: Margriet Caswell (202) 219-0434.**

**DETECTING RESIDUES** -- USDA has developed new laboratory procedures for extracting pesticide residues from food samples in minutes instead of hours. Many current methods require an entire day and large amounts of hazardous solvents. The new procedures takes only five minutes using small amounts of water or other safe solvents. Analysts use the procedures with commercially available kits to check for herbicides and insecticides in milk, meat, liver and eggs at the 10-50 parts per billion tolerance levels set by the Environmental Protection Agency. **Contact: Steve Lehotay (301) 504-8904.**

**PROTECTING FARMLAND** -- USDA is implementing amendments made to the Farmland Protection Policy Act that require Federal agencies to consider alternatives that could lessen the impact of their decisions regarding prime farmland. Agencies will review their policy and procedures that could convert farmland to nonagricultural use, and make revisions as necessary to comply with the directive to protect the best agricultural land. Examples of actions that are affected include loans to construct houses on farmland, and federal funding for construction of highways, airports, and local sewer and water systems. **Contact: Diana Morse (202) 720-4772.**

**SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM** -- USDA is working with States to recruit local sponsors for the Summer Food Service Program. The summer program operates when the School Lunch Program stops for summer vacation. Sponsors are often school districts, and private non-profit organizations that handle the administrative details for reimbursement. While nearly 14 million low-income children receive meals free or at reduced price during the school year, only 2.1 million children receive meals through the summer program.

**NOTICE** *Farm Broadcasters Letter will be on vacation July 4-8. Next issue dated July 15.*



## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA #1934** -- Grain producers now have to be international marketers as well as efficient producers. Brenda Curtis talks with three experts about what kind of world confronts producers as they attempt to export their products. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME #1416** -- Higher coffee prices; good bugs for your garden; researchers look for new ways to control the ultimate "bad bug," the fire ant; the cutting issue of cutting boards; new products from wool. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

**AGRITAPE FEATURES #1926** -- Russian grain import needs reduced; trends in U.S. grain marketing; cool cows are happy cows; USDA sets new export goal; EPA announces ethanol decision; who pays for GATT? (Weekly reel of features.)

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Wednesday, July 6, ag prices annual summary; Friday, July 8, ITC expected to hold hearing on Canadian wheat issue; Tuesday, July 12, U.S. crop production report and items from World Ag Supply and Demand report will be placed on the Newsline at 10:30 a.m., further items including crop and weather update at the usual 5:00 p.m. ET; Wednesday, July 13, world/US cotton update, hog outlook, world ag/grain situation, world oilseed situation; Thursday, July 14, feed update; Friday, July 15, milk production. The U.S. House of Representatives could vote on USDA reorganization Bill anytime after July 11. Newsline will carry the story. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359**  
**COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**  
*Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.*

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES** -- USDA/EPA ethanol announcement.

**ACTUALITIES** -- USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on the weather and crop situation.

*On satellite Galaxy 7, transponder 9, channel 9, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 3880 MHz.: Thursdays from 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., ET; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., ET.*

## OFFMIKE

**THE VIEW...**from my window is absolutely beautiful, says **Neil Trobak** (KCIM/KKRL, Carroll, IA). Rains have been near perfect producing corn, beans and hay that never looked better. The only problem is low prices for cattle and hogs that will likely take a toll on marginal producers. A ripple effect could be felt later this year with reduced grain sales for animal feed. Grocery stores are advertising meat specials to move the product. Producers are questioning whether the big hog confinements are taking a toll on prices. Neil says that last year the problem was rain, this year its prices, put one fire out and another takes it place.

**IN WISCONSIN...**June Is Dairy Month is a big thing, says **Jerry Urdahl** (WWIB, Chippewa Falls, WI). He covered 12 dairy breakfasts in communities served by the station. While the outlook for dairy is good, prices this summer are down. An upturn is forecast later this year.

**COUNTY FAIR...**coverage starts in August, says **Matt Westergaard** (KMIT, Mitchell, SD). It'll be followed by Matt's marriage, Sept. 10 to **Julie Hetland**, from nearby Mitchell. Congratulations!

## *Farm Broadcasters Letter*



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Washington, D.C. 20250-1340

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**COTTON...**looks good, but it will have to survive several days of triple-digit temperatures attempting to bake it dry, says **Curt Lancaster** (VSA Radio Network, San Angelo, TX). Curt, as NAFB president, says the organization is about to release results of a phone survey of 14,000 farmers in the North Central region. It is a system that will eventually be used in other regions. Curt says the theme for this November's NAFB convention is "NAFB At 50. Celebrating the Foundations of our Future." **Joe Cornely** (WRFD, Columbus, OH) is the convention chairman.

**FAREWELL...**as writer, editor and producer of this publication. I've enjoyed writing this column since 1988 as chief of the former Radio & Television Division, and writing and producing the entire newsletter since 1993. New responsibilities helping to oversee policy and Office of Communications compliance with executive branch directives are driving the change. I'll miss the weekly contact with farm broadcasters. Larry Quinn, director of the Video, Teleconference and Radio Unit, will have responsibility for publication. I'll look forward to reading about you in this newsletter and in CHATS.

**VIC POWELL**  
Office of Communications